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Ministry of Advanced Education

STUDENTS, EDUCATORS HELP SHAPE POST-SECONDARY FUTURE

VANCOUVER – Students, presidents and board chairs from post-secondary institutions all over B.C. have gathered for a unique forum hosted by Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell to discuss the next phase of Campus 2020 to shape the future of higher education in B.C.

"B.C. has a strong, vibrant post-secondary education system, and this government wants to ensure it continues to respond to the province's diversity and changing demographics," Coell said. "We are continuing the consultative process of Campus 2020 with this unprecedented gathering of students, post-secondary institution presidents and board chairs, and other partners to discuss the special role institutions will play as we move towards becoming the best-educated place in North America."

Campus 2020: Thinking Ahead was launched by Premier Gordon Campbell to focus on the future of post-secondary education. The report, written by special adviser Geoff Plant, made 52 recommendations following five months' consultation, visits to 18 communities across the province, and more than 200 written and electronic submissions.

"The Campus 2020 report focused on broad principles, goals and strategies, some of which we have already put in place," Coell said. "As we develop our blueprint for further action, we are continuing to consult with the post-secondary system to make sure our changes create the most benefit for students and are made smoothly and effectively."

Government has already acted on several of the report's recommendations, including:

- Making tuition free for all adult basic education.
- Commissioning an independent review of private post-secondary governance, legislation and accountability, expected to be released in the next few weeks.
- Appointing more members to the board of the Private Career Training Institutions Agency to increase representation from outside the sector.

This week's two-day forum focused on collaboration and student-centred education. Seventy students from public and private colleges, universities, university colleges and institutes were invited, along with presidents, board chairs and other system partners.

Since 2001, government has created almost 22,000 new post-secondary student spaces – including doubling the number of first-year training spaces for medical students, increasing nursing seats by 82 per cent, and doubling the number of trades training spaces. It has also invested $1.2 billion to improve campuses and $1.5 billion to fund research and innovation.

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